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ANOTHER SIDE OF WAR

His Music Is His Weapon

By MARY McGRORY
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Pham Duy Can is a Vietnamese composer and singer who was once a follower of Ho Chi Minh, the North Vietnamese president.

Now he is a troubadour for freedom and tours Viet Nam as an "artist soldier."

His leader is Maj. Gen. Edward Lansdale, the famous old Far Eastern hand who went back to Saigon with Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge last summer as head of U.S. "counterinsurgency," an operation he interprets as being nice to people and involving them with their government.

Duy Can is an ardent admirer of Lansdale and agrees wholly with him that "the war cannot be won with bombs alone."

Duy Can, who once studied music in France and appears to be the George Gershwin of his country, quit the Viet Minh forces when he decided they were totally under Communist domination.

Now 45, round-faced, intense and cheerful, he speaks of his country's dilemma:

"The people are suffering too much. They hate this war, but they must go on with it."

During his stay, he will give folk concerts—he made his debut before the Washington Folklore Society yesterday—and add to his repertory of American songs. He wishes to acquaint American audiences with Vietnamese "heart songs" of his own composition.

The essential ingredient of a heart song is that it express the suffering and the determination of a war-weary people.

"I Leave It All to You," the lament of a dying soldier, is typical:

*I leave it all to you
I leave to you our motherland
I leave to you the beauties of
Viet Nam
Our heroes bold and true,
The glorious past we knew
I leave you all we could not
do
I leave to you this tired life
I leave a country torn by
strife."*

Duy Can, with a troupe of 10, including an American blond named Jane Pratt, travels through the provinces singing songs that stir the spirit of the people. Two of the most popular numbers are Vietnamese translations of "We Shall Overcome" and "Clementine."

"We Shall Overcome" is introduced as a hymn against tyranny, and "Clementine" as a U.S. peasant's love song.

Although he has been in the United States only a week, Duy Can says he has already picked up one grave misconception we have about his people.

He has been hearing that Viet Nam's real problem is that it lacks a sense of nationhood.

"Not true," he says. "We know our history. It is a history of 2,000 years of struggle against Chinese and then French domination."

He is far less concerned about the current strife between Premier Nguyen Cao Ky and the Buddhist followers of Gen. Nguyen Chanh Thi than are most observers in Washington.

"It is a lesson in democracy that we have learned from you," he says. "The important thing is that the people did not choose Ho Chi Minh."

"With freedom you have many troubles and much confusion," he says. "Under communism you have no trouble and no confusion but you cannot live. We accept the trouble because it is the ransom of the freedom."